

Comparison of Family Assessment and Investigation

	Family Assessment	Investigation (Family or Facility)
What	Assessment & service approach – preferred response	Investigative/forensic approach
When	Preferred response when no allegation of substantial child endangerment	Required if allegation is substantial child endangerment (SCE) or happened in facility
Definition	Comprehensive assessment with a focus on engaging and partnering with the family to utilize family strengths in providing safety for children.	Comprehensive investigation which includes interviewing and engagement skills to assess safety and risk issues. Fact gathering includes interviewing all appropriate parties, in partnership with law enforcement.
Maltreatment Determination	No	Yes
Services needed determination	Yes	Yes
Gather info on substance abuse and domestic violence	Yes	Yes
Authority to interview	Child, child's responsible caregiver, alleged offender, others with knowledge of alleged maltreatment	Same
Permission to interview child	Notification to parent preferred unless child's safety compromised	Not required or preferred except in facility investigation, when alleged offender is not parent, parental notification is preferred
Relevant info	To determine child safety, risk of maltreatment, family strengths/needs, and need for protective or supportive services	To assess immediate child safety needs and risk of future maltreatment, and to determine whether maltreatment occurred and need for protective services
Initial face-to-face contact with child and primary caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assure safety of child using SDM Safety Assessment tool • Within five calendar days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same, except no SDM tools in facility investigations • Immediately (within 24-hours) in reports of substantial child endangerment; within five calendar days otherwise
Initial face-to-face interview with alleged offender	Early stages of assessment/ investigation if not already interviewed as primary caregiver	Same
Attempt to contact	Every 5 days until contact is made	Every day when SCE is alleged; every 5 days when non-SCE is alleged until contact is made. Consultation with

		County or Tribal Attorney as needed based on safety concerns.
Interview format	Audio or audio-video not required or recommended	Audio is recommended; audio-video recommended for sexual abuse cases MN Stat 626.556 Subd. 10j (permission required)
Conclusion	Within 45 calendar days	Same
Extension of conclusion	For completion of criminal investigation or receipt of expert information	Same
Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 10 working days • Parent/guardian • Need for services to address safety and significant risk of subsequent maltreatment, or family support services agreed upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 10 working days • Parent/guardian, alleged offender, director of facility if applicable • Determinations and summary of reasons for determination
Administrative reconsideration	Not applicable as no maltreatment determination is made	Allowed as per statute
Case closing	Document outcome including description of services provided and removal/reduction of risk	Same
Written case plan	Within 30 days of opening for case management	Same; not required in facility investigations
Record retention	Four years or longer if placement occurred during case opening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four years if neither maltreatment nor need for protective services is determined, or longer if placement occurred during case opening. • At least ten years if maltreatment or need for protective services is determined